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A

FAIR EXPOSITION

OF THE

P R I N C I P L E S

OF THE

W H I G C L U B;

WITH SOME CURSORY

OBSERVATIONS ON A PAMPHLET,

E N T I T L E D,

“ Thoughts on a Letter to Mr. Conolly.”

 B Y A N I R I S H M A N.

“ There is no theme so large and so easy—no discourse so common
 “ and so plausible, as the faults or corruptions of government—the
 “ misarranges or complaints of magistrates:—none so easily received,
 “ and spread among good and well-meaning men—none so mis-
 “ chievously raised by ill, nor turned to worse, nor more disguised
 “ purposes.”—TEMPLE.

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A

FAIR EXPOSITION, &c.

THE acrimony, with which the late contests in this country have been kept alive, and the very active industry, with which certain maxims of government are abused, and certain opinions are disseminated, have given a new and important character to our political speculations. The combatants on both sides have entered the lists with a very remarkable degree of asperity; and a great constitutional question has been falsely and unfairly handled, in the general, as if it were a matter of mere personal competition. I look upon it in a different light; and the object of the following pages shall be to state in that point of view, which alone I think the just one, those imperial and legislative rights of this kingdom, which have been so much the object of controversy.

In the discussion of any subject, in which the liberty of mankind is, or is supposed to be, interested, to obtain for Truth a favourable hearing is not always so easy as it is imagined.

B

To

To see with precision the exact point of time, at which advantage may be taken of public opinion; to anticipate popular confidence by a warm and unequivocal adoption of popular prejudices; and, to excite, or strengthen the outrage of clamour against measures, which it may be popular to oppose; or men, whose stations may render them obnoxious to abuse, are means, of better effect in determining the political opinion of mankind, than we are in general aware of.

Men, who take up zealously that side of any political question, which rejects the power of the state, to court the passions of the multitude, have a wonderful advantage in the very outset of their undertaking; and it is really extraordinary to think how great an influence this factious conduct, if well disguised, has, in drawing to it the confidence of others, whose education and interest in the common good should have enabled and obliged them to form more safe and more just notions.

He, who will abuse established authority, may easily obtain the audience and the approbation of those, who are restrained by its coercion, or undistinguished by its favour. He, who will impeach the despotism of the government, or the wantonness of the ministers, needs but little pains to ensure the concurrence of those, whose ambition is disappointed, or whose turbulence is subdued. They who have nothing to lose, will scarcely be forward in supporting an establishment, that does not succour their desperation; and since, if they can be bettered by any thing, it must be by a change, they will necessarily magnify the advantages of any change, by which they may be gainers.

With

With a multitude, so vast, and so various, it is not strange that ingenuity should easily confirm what passion had excited; and that self-interest, discontent, or resentment, should clothe, in the dress of patriotism, the vilest and foulest principles that ever disturbed society: and the apprehensions of the well-meaning being once put into fermentation by a strongly infused fear of the public safety, it is not singular that the cooler passions of artful and designing persons, if they be well-dissembled by a specious zeal for the general good, shall so often be able to overbear the dispassionate voice of reason.

*To lament the fallaciousness of all assurance that can be given of public retrenchment, without considering any of the numberless instances, in which retrenchment is impracticable, or would be delusive—To abuse the profusion of ministerial prodigality in those expences whose diminution is impossible—To deplore the extinction of that disinterested system of public service, whose principles no longer have their place in the world—To bewail the corruption of government, which submits to ensure, by reciprocal confidence, and honourable provision, the support and service of those, whose abilities entitle them to trust, and whose labours deserve reward; to assume the veil of patriotism, to boast its sufferings and to manifest its constancy—go an inconceivable way in the formation of a popular character. He, who has lost by his apostacy, what his consistency might have preserved, may, if he have impudence enough, transpose the terms, and attribute to the obstinacy of his conscience, the versatility of his conduct. He may desert the power, which has raised him, when he has become independent of its protection: And as “*Jsburun* waxed fat and kicked,” he may turn his back upon the hand that clothed his nakedness and*

fed his hunger. Mankind is but too fond of taking characters in the gross, and judging, by wholesale, that honesty which, if it were weighed by retail in the balance, would be found notoriously wanting.

With a great portion of the world, however, such conduct as I have mentioned, will entitle a man to call himself a Patriot. He may boast, with the people, the sacrifice of his advancements, by a disgust at that service, for which he had been exalted to dignity, or enriched by profit. He may make or subscribe his political creed, and, with most apostolical submission, and penitence, trust his salvation to his faith in their mercy, and not to his works for their honour. What though he hath been a transgressor? The enormity of his sins shall be expiated by the extravagance of his zeal, or the sincerity of his contrition. It is true, he has not insulted his political creators, even by a death-bed repentance, but, with the same uniform and intrepid neglect of his duty to them, that marked his life, he disdained to wait the hand of mortality, and went off, with all the full blown glories of his disobedience fresh upon his head, in an act of suicide, the more heroic, because it was unnecessary. His spirit returns to those who gave it, and it has not been through his neglect, but its arrival will be marked with more true joy, than had attended ninety and nine of the righteous.

The name of patriot challenges my esteem and my affections. It summons my memory to the reverence of those great names, to which the nations of the earth owe their glory and their happiness: it calls me to the tombs of those who, when there was occasion, struggled and bled for their altars and their children, and had minds sufficiently ex-
panded

panded to forget their private interests and their personal animosities, when the common interest demanded the exertion of their wisdom and their labours. It hurries my admiration through all the successions of time, and I associate the names of Cincinnatus and of Cato, of Caractacus and of Chatham, with my wonder and my gratitude. When I remember that these men gloried in the appellation of patriot, the modern pretenders to so dignified a title will excuse the bluntness of my temper, if I can not willingly pay equal respect to a mask assumed by hypocrites and desperadoes.

The vanity and the falsehood, with which many who assume this character, anxiously exaggerate the magnitude of present concerns, and “the importance of the present critical moment,” have been so long hackneyed and are so well understood, that it is a chance, if ever there shall be any real occasion for those alarms, by which the public mind has been thus idly agitated, that those, who might be awakened by such means to a necessary vigilance, will slumber on in senseless incredulity of the real danger. It is for the happiness of this country, however, that it does not want men who know and regard its real glory and profitable interests; and who will observe its situation with more calm circumspection, than suits the purposes of designing, or the character of intemperate, men. They will neither be terrified into sudden extravagance by visionary evil, nor lulled into dishonourable inactivity under imminent danger.

The present concerns of this country at this hour really are of consequence; and the time presents us with many objects of serious moment.

Under

Under a late administration in this kingdom, it became necessary for the ministers of the crown, and the real friends of the country, to observe a very resolute and unshaken firmness in the preservation of that constitution, by which alone this island can ever attain true greatness. This conduct has fortunately not been unsuccessful: and it seems pretty well understood, that that faction which was hurried by its folly and wickedness to such lengths as they reached in the last session, will, in the present one, exhibit a sorry, though a just, picture of the instability of those connexions, which are formed upon a sacrifice of principle. With this session, this parliament, it is apprehended, will be dissolved; and something must be quickly done for the regaining of influence, and the recovery of character. The time *has just past*, in which we saw men sacrificing all the empty popularity that a crazy rabble could bestow, for the sake of preserving that constitution in which their happiness as citizens is so much at stake;—in which we saw Treachery assuming the shape of Independence, and Faction challenging the honours of Patriotism, for the purpose of effecting a dismemberment of the empire.—The time *is approaching very fast*, when the people will be called upon to distinguish their friends and to reject their betrayers—and in the scanning of that political conduct, in which the whole community is interested; *the moment is arrived* in which it is necessary to varnish what has been unsound—to prop what has been imperfect—to disguise designs that have been mischievously planned, and to avow attempts that have not been honourably or effectually concerted.

A season could scarcely have arrived, in which it was more necessary for the heads of this party, to
reconcile

reconcile their conduct, and to defend their principles. They have attempted both. Treachery, violence, and inconsistency have been rendered still more inexplicable, by the futility of explanation; and principles have been associated for their defence, as if only to prove how they destroy each other.—A rule of constitutional faith is promulged, with a “*Qui vult sapere?*” tacked to it, in all the zeal and intolerance of bigotry; and an entire subscription to all the incoherence and mischief of it, rendered the only passport to political salvation, through the merits of WHIGGISM.

The language of discontent has not for some years had, in this country, so favourable a moment for its reception. The Marquis of Buckingham had been impertinent enough to let his curiosity loose on all the public officers. He had presumed to discard from places of public trust, those who had neglected the public business and wasted the public money. He had had the audacity to charge defaulters with defalcation—to disgrace knavery by detection, and to disable peculation by removal. He had been ungracious enough to consider the allegiance he owed to his king, and his duty to the constitution, as ties superior to the obligation of a vote of the commons, or of the lords along with them. He had had either resolution enough to persevere in his duty, unterrified by popular threats, and unshaken by vulgar abuse—or prudence enough not to hazard his head on the other side of the water, by a traiterous dereliction of his sovereign on this. His conduct was avowed, defended and supported by a strong combination of honour, duty, principle, genius and learning: it is true, he was opposed and reviled, even by some, who were glittering in the splendour, to which his administration had raised them, or
 leading

feeding on the lucre of those places with which they had been entrusted by his confidence. Those who had grown rich, by their gleanings from the public stock, detested a man who had spoiled so plentiful an harvest. Those who were turned out of places, rendered lucrative by abuse, arraigned the unkindness of the man, who would not wink at the extortions of his friends ; and those who supplied their room, acknowledged but half the benefaction, which was accompanied with the exaction of duty and the refusal of connivance.

In this season of difference and discontent, came out the famous Resolutions of the Whig Club; a society so called, for no other human reason that I can conceive entitling it to that epithet, except to distinguish it from a club of gamblers, or a club of drunkards ;—to discriminate it, by an unfit and unbecoming appellation, from the subscribers to Daly's, or the Aldermen of Skinner's-Alley.

This association affects, however, to be formed in favour of—“ *The sacred rights of the people* ;” and to consist of men, possessing the “ *genuine Whig principle*.” Its Resolutions are calculated accordingly, to render that momentous by profession, which obscurity had made indefinite ; and to procure credit for those assurances, which had hitherto been admired, only because they were incredible. The misfortune of the Whig Club is, that, after all their labours, the maxims they lay down are but ill understood, even by themselves, and the constancy of their vows as little relied on by the world.

Political axioms, or errors affecting axiomatical verity, it is true, derive a great portion of their credit, particularly with the vulgar, from the unequivocality

equivocality with which they are propounded. He, who is positive, at least appears to be in earnest. Few men are in earnest against conviction. And, to be convinced ourselves, or to affect being convinced, is allowed to be a necessary preparative for convincing others. The Resolutions, though not altogether intelligible, are sufficiently positive. The facts are remarkably strong, though unfortunately false: and, the principles, or *postulata*, are dogmatical enough for their danger and inconsistency. All together they are very generally investigated, because of their purpose, and often hastily adopted because of their professions. That they should be an object of admiration with many of their readers, will be extremely natural, while ignorance shall continue to excite wonder at mystery. Of those who peruse, and approve them, numbers take them on the general character of some "illustrious names that," according to the assertion of the Whig, "are to be found in this association;" many more because they oppose, abuse, and traduce, the Marquis of Buckingham's administration. Those, who really do understand their design, and origin, accept them because they are factious, and angry: those who do not, are satisfied that Mr. Conolly is the secretary, and that they say something about the *Freedom of Election*, and the *Unconstitutional Police of the City of Dublin*.

In considering them as I shall do, to follow the string of Resolutions, according to the order, in which they are arranged, or to animadvert on every particular resolve, is not my object. The public time and the public judgment are ill-valued by those, who expect to become the objects of national confidence, or national attention, because they have for ever been, and ever will be, impeding the machine of

government by contemptible scrutinies and unfelt retrenchments. The public mind would be agitated to an ill, and an idle purpose, by a discussion of the private vices ^{and} the personal virtues of those men who have divided the confidence of the people of England between them. We have no interest in their theoretical experiments, or practical systems of government, but as they concern our independence and our security.

I shall, therefore, consider the principles, by which this society is governed, in their matter and effect, as they relate to the independence of our legislature, and the security of our imperial connexion.

1. The system of political conduct, which the Resolutions of the Whig Club tend to originate and support, assume as a maxim, that it is necessary for the preservation of this country to establish *a party* in Ireland, which shall act in concert with *another party* in England, governed by the same views and directed by the same principles. *

There

* The Writer for the Whig Club above mentioned, and who signs himself "A WHIG" at the foot of a long, dull farrago of plagiarisms which he has collected for their defence, makes two (as he calls them) natural questions on this head—1st. "Whether party" "be, under any circumstances or qualifications, admissible into this" "country?—and 2dly, supposing this to be made out, how far" "the Whig Club may lay claim to public confidence upon those" "grounds?" The latter question we shall have occasion to discuss hereafter. The former one is not fairly put by that Gentleman, as the reader will instantly perceive by comparing it with the proposition, above stated, as a fundamental principle of the Whig Club. And, he has qualified it, himself, throughout his Pamphlet, by giving a decided preference to *one* of two parties in England, and by resting on that preference as a motive of conduct with his Club equally advantageous and justifiable.

There are few terms in ordinary use applied to the description of more opposite characters and conduct than that word Party. It is seventeen centuries, since Plutarch observed the use of *parties*, in a commonwealth, which says he, like ballast in a ship keep it upright and steady. It is not more than half a century since Montesquieu lamented the spirit of *faction*, by which the *parties* in England had been successively animated, which unsettled the government, and unhinged the constitution. And in every age, and in every country, the associations that have been formed on public concerns, and political principles, have been debased to one character or dignified by the other. Marius and Sylla divided the Roman commonwealth by their parties. The wealth of the state was sacrificed by reciprocal confiscations: the capital and provinces were drenched in blood by reciprocal proscriptions; and the general liberty sunk exhausted under their mutual struggles. The Cavaliers and Roundheads formed parties in England. Hampden found advantage from a party, to a cause, in which every man ought to have been a partizan, because the common liberty was concerned; and Cromwell found his advantage in a faction, which every honest man ought to have resisted. I need not tell the villainous excesses, to which the craft of some men, and the fanaticism of others, led the factions in England at that unhappy period; but there is a reflection of my Lord Clarendon's upon their conduct, which so strongly applies to the parties of our own day, that I can not resist the force of it. "Men," says he, "of activity and faction, in any design, have many advantages that a composed and settled council, though industrious enough, usually have not; and some that gallant men can not give themselves leave to entertain; for besides their thorough confi-

“ considering and forming their counsels before they
 “ execute them, they contract an habit of ill nature,
 “ and dissingenuity, necessary to their affairs, and
 “ the temper of those, upon whom they are to
 “ work, that liberal minded men would not per-
 “ suade themselves to entertain, even for the pre-
 “ vention of all those mischiefs, the others intended.
 “ And whosoever observes the ill arts, by which
 “ these men used to prevail upon the people in ge-
 “ neral, their absurd ridiculous lying, to win the
 “ affections and corrupt the understandings of the
 “ weak, and the bold scandals to confirm the wilful,
 “ the boundless promises they presented to the am-
 “ bitious, and their gross abject flatteries and ap-
 “ plications to the vulgar spirited, would hardly
 “ give himself leave to use those weapons for the
 “ preservation of the three kingdoms.”

That many of that party, whose principles we
 have experienced, and are every day proving, have
 not gone the same unjustifiable lengths, that those of
 Lord Clarendon’s observation arrived to, has hap-
 pened, I fear, not because the men are not worse,
 but that the times are better.

The idea of party, in a government such as ours,
 and conceived abstractedly, is, in some measure, a
 popular theme. Any man who has a warm and
 poetical imagination may find, in it, an *ignis fatuus*,
 that shall lead him, by the most fanciful illusions,
 through all the blessings of Utopia. If he want
 sobriety of judgment, or solidity of genius for em-
 bellishment, or defence, Bolingbroke and Hume
 will supply him with both.* If

* The Writer for the Whig Club has originated a new idea of
 the benefits that are to arise to the country from the formation of a

If the question had been, whether *A Party* in this country, formed upon *intrinsic principles*, and consisting of men, upright, uniform, and incorruptible, might not be likely to serve its cause, I should not have undertaken to prove the negative.

The question, which has been made, is, whether *A Party* can possibly be expected to act steadily, and invariably, for the real interests of Ireland, while the very bond and security of its union is an implicit attachment to *another* party in England, on whose principles it is united “because these principles are its own.”

I am indifferent, in this stage of the consideration, to what party in England, this Irish brotherhood knits itself. The mischief will be sufficient, if we shall become the creatures of any aristocracy, connected with an aristocracy in another country, while the power, from which honours, places, power, and advancements proceed, must be the ruling power of that country, and by the very principles of its constitution, may be at some time or other directed

PARTY ON PRINCIPLE.—“ You want, says he, “ a law of reputation, to which nothing can give so much efficacy as a party on principle—by tying down corrupt characters to particular points, you will prevent them from relying on the secrecy of those designs, which, individually, and unassociated, they might easily form, at the price of their honour. By stimulating those of a wavering and flexible temper, you infuse a portion of courage into them that shall unite and render them steady to your cause in all changes. And though their nature had inclined them to act the *Traitor*, or the *Coward*, to *your Party*, you will now be assured of their constancy by thus subjecting their conduct, as it shall relate to their promises, to the great tribunal of the Majesty of the People.”—This is the abridgment of a defence which runs through six or seven pages, equally redounding to the honour of the Whigs, and illustrating the ingenuity of their advocate.

directed by that foreign junto. How much it were to be wished, that the seductions of favour, the dispensation of power, and the attractions of patronage, had less value than they are known to obtain, amongst mankind, every one agrees. Many of us feel their effects, and we all acknowledge their influence. But we all know, and, none of us can disapprove it, as a maxim of those men, who are called to the difficulties of government, that all places are not always given merely for the fitness, nor taken away merely for the unfitness of those, who fill them. There are, and ever will be, many persons, unplaced, of equal capacity with those, who are honourably loaded with the labours of advancement. But, we should give little praise to the prudence or consistency of that Minister, who should fill the places of government, with those who would oppose his measures, or share his power with those, who would counteract his principles.

This is a stretch of human virtue, that even the Whig Club does not affect. No: They openly avow their fealty to that party in England, whose principles are their own; to the event of whose fortune they submit themselves, with resignation. And their claim to favour and confidence from the people of this country, is to be grounded upon the abstract advantages of party in general, and the beautiful thralldom, in which our government shall be involved, when the system of its management shall be shaken by every interior change in the British cabinet.

“ The subordinacy government,” says Sir William Temple, “ changing hands so often, makes an
 “ unsteadiness in the pursuit of the public interests
 “ of the kingdom, gives way to the emulations of
 “ the

“ the different factions, and draws the favour of
 “ countenance of government, sometimes to one
 “ party, sometimes to another, making different
 “ motions in men’s minds, raising hopes and fears,
 “ and opinions of uncertainty, in their possessions,
 “ and thereby in the peace of the country.”

I am aware of the material difference between the mode of government in this country, at the time Sir William Temple wrote his Essay on “ the Advancement of Trade in Ireland,” and that of our time. But any man of common discernment will instantly observe the application of the passage just quoted, to our present circumstances.

Our Constitution is free; our Government is settled; our unanimity has rendered us respectable, and has given us the means of wealth. I would not endanger our freedom, by grafting an Irish decemvirate upon the stock of an English coalition, to raise an aristocracy in the state upon the ruins of the monarchy. I would not endanger our security, by forcing men into a choice of evils, wherein it may be better to merge our independence by an Union, than to sacrifice every thing by a separation. I would not multiply difficulties on the executive magistrate, to multiply the patronage of a party, and the expences of the country. I would not interrupt our unanimity, by arraying the people in the different uniforms of different demagogues, nor impede the progress of our industry, by enlisting them in drinking clubs. Rejoicing that my native land is restored to her proper station in the scale of empire, I would watch narrowly and resist strenuously the introduction of any alien policy, and preserve the machine of government from all action or controul,

control, that should not originate radically and fundamentally within itself.

De Lolme, whose admiration and love of freedom are neither disguised, nor lukewarm, assumes no light air of consequence, in the boast that he was born in a republic which had been "independent" because "it contained within itself the principles of its motions." And yet that very De Lolme shall be taken by wholesale, as an authority to justify an *extrinsic and derivative influence* of foreign principles, to operate on the motions of this country, whose independence no man questions so much, as those; that affect to be its loudest advocates.

What honourable man can be expected to devote his time, his health or his labours to the cause of this country, if it shall ever come under the dominion of this double-headed aristocracy? Praiseworthy service can look with certainty for reward, but as it becomes factious. Honest ambition can stimulate industry, only thro' the patronage of a foreign party. To serve the crown, as its officer or minister, a man must transfer his allegiance from the sovereign to the subject: to serve the people as its representative, a man must sacrifice his principles to the creed of a select few, whom power has rendered irresistible. Is this a state in which Genius, Learning, or Independence will brook such indignities, for influence, that must be obtained by a barter of feeling, and place, that shall be held only by the confidence of servility?

It is but a dull answer, to say that by becoming the tools of any English party, the people of this country will entitle themselves to a certain return of favour and kindness from that party, whenever it shall

shall arise to power. It is an absurdity equalled only by its impudence, to say to a great nation—
 “ Espouse my faction, support my politics, defend
 “ my India bill, justify my coalition ; for since I
 “ have been displaced, your interests have been sa-
 “ crificed, and it is only by my re-accession to au-
 “ thority, that you are to expect prosperity.”

Let us for a moment consider the situation of an English minister. He has arisen into notice, and grown into strength, by the confidence of the people. That barren applause, which the enthusiasm of the public bestowed upon him, has forced him into the notice, and confidence of his sovereign. Selected from the great mass of the people, of whom all admired the greatness to which all contributed, he is now beheld with greater circumspection, and the popularity and merits, which before, were indeterminate, become more strictly defined. Yet, his greatness has not become secure. To retain as much of that confidence among the people, as can consist with so much power, he must feel, or seem to feel a strong bent to their wishes ; and it is by labouring, or affecting to labour at some particular points, which interest their vanity, their turbulence, their discontent, or their liberty, that he expects a continuance of their attachment. One man protests against the East-India bill ; another will repeal the commutation tax ; a third will shorten the duration of parliaments. But will any man in his reason have the effrontery to say, that an English minister will court the parliament, or an English candidate solicit the suffrages of the people, by telling them how many good things he has accomplished for Ireland ? How he has raised her trade and manufactures to a competition with their own ? Would Mr. Fox go to the Hustings in Covent-Garden, or

Mr. Cruger to the Guild-Hall of Bristol, to tell their constituents how active they have been in promoting the Irish commerce, or boast a voluntary beneficence, that sacrifice of local interests and national monopoly, or national usurpation, which, when it was and when it ever shall be made, did and must arise from the circumstances of the times?

The Whig Club is not upprovided of a subterfuge against this plain reasoning. What can not be directly opposed may be evaded obliquely, and stratagem will supply the place of resistance. "Now I ask," says their unblushing Advocate, "was Mr. Fox singular in his assertion of British supremacy in matters of external legislation?—or was it not the universal sentiment of Englishmen?" This is an argument that applies to the conduct of every English party on every interesting question; and that should ever keep the FREE PEOPLE of Ireland from joining any of them. But the members of the Whig Club well know that there is a great number, who will always be glad to join any party against the government; and that sounding the trumpet of Discontent will, at any time be sufficient to bring this large squadron to their banners. There are many, of as little virtue though of more cunning, whom it would be necessary to secure by their self-interest—and a great multitude are of that near sight, which can not explore principles nor unravel intrigue, whom it was necessary to decoy from their allegiance and their security, by putting words of great length and acknowledged importance of meaning, most unmeaningly together, and by making extravagant promises, with the sincerest purposes of their violation.

To save the candidates for this honourable society the unprofitable trouble of political speculations, the
great

great blessings of *a party* were left to be discussed by the vulgar. The idea was refined to suit with higher capacities by being attached to Mr. Fox, and his friends, and it was assumed as a——

Second fundamental principle, that that Gentleman and the rest of his party, *under whose power, and with whose concurrence our Rights were originally restored to us*, were those alone to whom Ireland can look for safety, and to whom alone the Whigs can attach themselves because the same principles are common to them all.

Those who had attained so much, and so much good, could scarcely be suspected of failing in any ordinary undertaking, and it might be craftily insinuated, how unlikely it is, that they, of all men, would attempt any thing evil. The likelihood of provision, under auspices, so powerful, would secure the needy; and the plausibility of assurances, so full of patriotism, could hardly fail of gaining the simple.

When we consider the motley, and diversified union, of characters, and principles, of which the Whig Club is composed; the various, and contradictory pursuits, and systems, by which the majority of its members has so often been directed; and the contrariety of political opinions, which on many subjects is still known to subsist amongst them, it is hard to conceive that the whole of that body could be absolutely in earnest when they published their Resolutions. There are among its founders and proselytes, certainly, some persons of very estimable and honourable character: and some of very lively genius, or very competent intelligence. The former of these would never seriously form a plan which they should conceive to be destructive of the

true interests of this country: and perhaps many of the latter description would not be found enrolled in their confederacy, if their fancy and their vanity had not outrun their discretion, and their judgment. It is the misfortune however of that society, that it is for the most part composed of, and entirely governed by, a set of men possessing either a capacity for very dangerous artifice, or a disposition of most credulous simplicity. And, between these two combinations, a system has been formed, that I can hardly suppose men of the former description understand, and I scarcely think any of the latter character able to defend.

The meaning of this, their second proposition, every body perceives; that this country owes its present freedom and security to Charles Fox and his party; and that from Charles Fox and his party all its future prosperity is to be derived.

The first of these positions is a wicked perversion of fact; the second a false conclusion, even if the former had been true.

The natural and political connexions of men had, in this country, been too long left to the arbitrary modifications of caprice and bigotry, of fear or artifice, of accident or jealousy. We had been accustomed to view the political association of states and empires under the regulation of effects but not of principles. But the rights of men in society were at last better understood, and the reciprocal bonds of union between empires became more strictly defined. A lamentable deluge of blood and treasure, wasted with a purpose of stifling the natural spirit of mankind, had effaced from the British character, those marks of conquest and
cruelty,

cruelty, of tyranny and usurpation, by which it had acquired real disgrace, and fallacious grandeur. Domination became accommodating, and Ambition submitted to yield, or was contented to temporize.

It was then that the great body of the Irish people, wincing under an unjustifiable dominion, which they felt their strength able to destroy, at once demanded and obtained their birthright in the British constitution. They recovered it, because it could not be with-held. The victories, by which Ireland regained her proper and rightful dignity, were not contested in College-Green nor in Saint Stephens Chapel; her treasures were not exhausted, and her blood was not spilt to secure, what her blood and her treasures alone would not have accomplished. Her cause was advanced by the blood of thousands, and the waste of millions, lost in the vain pursuit of American subjugation, and her battles were fought beyond the Atlantic. The people were determined to be **FREE**, and they obtained their emancipation.

Was this the work of a party? Was it because we were the tools of this or that faction in England, that Mr. Grenville's act of renunciation passed in the parliament of that country? Was it because we avowed ourselves the creatures of one cabal or other, that the idea of that renunciation was scouted, and a simple repeal relied upon in the parliament of this country? Was it because we dressed ourselves "in all the frippery of blue and red" or blue and buff, that the Whigs in England became so suddenly our preservers? No. The policy was prudent which complied with the prayers of three millions of a loyal people, and yielded to the demands of forty thousand freemen, armed in the cause of liberty, and
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he who attributes it to an affection for Ireland is either a fool or hypocrite.

Yet, it too often happens that impudent assertion gains upon the honest, and the credulous: and barefaced falsehood will frequently obtain credit even from its outrageousness. No simple man, reading the Resolutions of the Whig Club, could hesitate to pronounce, that it consisted of the favours of the country, united for its salvation: He would take it for granted that the party in England, to which it is united ("Because the principles of that party" are its own") had been the voluntary benefactors, from whose gratuity Ireland received her independence, her freedom and her prosperity.

I would ask any man of Mr. Fox's party in Ireland to defend the Whig Club in their connexion with him, as the patron of this country, and their dependance upon him as its protector, by answering the following plain questions.

Was it to shew his *zeal* for the independence of Ireland that he submitted to *repeal* the 6th of George the First, and then peevishly exclaimed that this repeal was "reducing England to unconditional submission, and humbling her at the feet of Ireland?"

Was it to prove his *cordiality*, in our cause, that he took an abundance of pains to extenuate his conduct in thus humbling his native land—and dwelling continually on his exculpation—so often sang his favourite cantata at Lord North—

"Ah me! ah me! what could I do?"

"The fault was all along of you!"

Was

Was it to prove that he agreed in restoring, to the kingdom of Ireland, its entire right of legislation, that he urged the reason, and the policy, of continuing the rights of external legislation in the British parliament? And cajoled his friend Lord Loughborough, to urge the impossibility of relinquishing the appellant jurisdiction in the British judicature?

Was it to manifest *the sincerity of his intentions*, that, even after the people of this country opened their eyes, and saw the doctrine of simple repeal in all its nakedness and deformity, he, in England, and his friend Colonel Fitzpatrick, the secretary here, discountenanced the Renunciation, and endeavoured (to use the words of the remarkable Mr. Flood) to hang us upon the implied faith of nations for the interpretation of that, in which we should have had unequivocal and legal security!

In later times, when the Irish Propositions were framed as a ground-work for a system of commercial regulation between the two countries, and Mr. Pitt, in whose favour to speak is now become blasphemy, was willing to accept them as we offered them, who were their opposers in the parliament of England? The Whigs and the Whig interest.

Was it to prove their encouragement of the Irish manufactures that Mr. Fox, and Mr. Sheridan, and the coalition Whig, Lord North, kept the English House of Commons so long in agitation, with all the petitions of all the traders and mechanics of England?

Was it to prove his willingness to serve our infant commerce, Mr. Fox boasted, that by his opposing
our

our Propositions he had redeemed England from danger and dishonour?

Or, was it to shew how little jealousy he had of our competition, that the only dishonour and danger he could point out, was, that, under any law framed according to these Propositions, the commerce of this country would be put upon a footing of equal security with that of Great Britain?

Let it not be said, that the distance of a few miles alters the material and important principles of the Whig in England, and his partizan in Ireland.

The Whig Club laments, as amongst the most crying evils this country has to deplore, that the influence of the Crown is not circumscribed, and that a reformation of parliament is not effected.

The Attorney General of the Duke of Portland, who was the first Whig Governor by whom we had been ruled for many years, and of Lord Northington, who was the only coalition Governor we ever had, opposed a parliamentary reform, as an attempt of discontented men to innovate upon the constitution.

The same Whig Attorney General (who by the way has been all his life as honourable and incorruptible a man as this country ever saw) defended the augmentation of the army list, at a time when the national revenues were not equal to its disbursements.

The same Whig Attorney General, supported the provincial regiments, and upheld what was by the
(then)

(then) Opposition abused, as the most wanton, wicked, and extravagant profusion of the public money, and called by as many ill names as ever were bestowed even on the Police.

I have gone with this subject further than I intended. If a Party had been formed in this country for the preservation of the empire: If men had associated to sustain the similarity of laws, the conformity of religion, the sameness of constitution, and the unity of the executive power, they need not have resorted to that mean system of false villification, from which the Whig Club has sought popularity. But when I see a combination of characters, who have never been consistent, and hear them boasting their principles: when I see a set of men, uniting together under an affected congeniality of opinion, who have embraced every opinion, under the pretext of supporting one Revolution, sowing the seeds of another; setting up an aristocratical confederacy between two desperate factions, instead of the natural union between two great kingdoms; substituting an unity of temper and a correspondence of sentiment for a junction of empire; cementing by faction and dividing by legislation; introducing into our government the influence of foreign politics; making English jealousy the barometer of Irish depression; rendering English favour the only way to Irish power; and attempting to form an imperial unity, consisting of two distinct and independent legislatures, with two distinct and unconnected executive magistrates—I can not seriously fear, that the wise and prudent part of the community will be entrapped by such men, or cajoled into such measures.

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Suppose

Suppose that faction, whose temporary triumph brought, for a while, so much shame and scandal on the legislature of this country, should by any means ensure a majority in the parliament; the principle by which it is cemented, is not of action, but of union. As a party, it will, and must, follow, the conduct of that party in England, to which it is bound. We become, in such a case, heedlessly and endlessly the tools of a faction, the more dangerous if entrusted with power; or we degenerate into an unprincipled opposition to administration *here*, because the ministry *there* is to be embarrassed and impeded. We confederate to create an influence on the Irish government, by the British politics; to distract our local and natural interests by foreign intrigues; and to change the legal dependence of our imperial legislation upon the unity of the empire, for an unnatural and untenable dependence of internal as well as imperial legislation, upon a cabal of Scotch beggars and English spend-thrifts.

The Whig Club was not by any means ignorant of the general effect, which this kind of reasoning would produce in counteracting their designs; and they directly saw the necessity of marking out some specific measure of political belief, and conduct, by which they might square with the most popular prepossessions.

Thus "that the great object of this society is
 " the constitution of the realm as settled by the
 " revolution in Great Britain and Ireland in 1688,"
 was a good bait to catch all the Protestant interest,
 and "the re-establishment in Ireland in 1782" was
 equally well adapted to secure all the Volunteers.
 Every one of the rabble would be gained by a reso-
 lution

lution to support and maintain, as a principal object and fundamental part of the constitution—" *The sacred Rights of the People*;" and every man of every description, who could understand the terms of the declaration, would agree that "the king of Ireland and the lords and commons thereof are the only legislature of this realm."

I own that this latter declaration, as it is worded in the resolutions, coupled with that which immediately follows it, would, if coming from any other sober set of men in the world, somewhat perplex me; and even from the Whig Club, it is beyond all their other inconsistencies, that those, who affected to differ with their countrymen only in the mode of preserving the unity of the empire, should hazard so undisguised and determined a method for its eternal separation.

"We declare," say they, "that *the Parliament of Ireland, that is to say, the king of Ireland, and the lords and commons thereof are the only legislature of this realm*"

"And we further declare, that *as far as in us lies, we will endeavour to preserve to this country, in all times to come, a Parliament of her own, residing within this realm, and exclusively invested with all parliamentary privileges, and powers.*"

On these two extraordinary resolutions, I shall make no comment: the Whig Club, by its own definition of the word "Parliament," has concluded me as to its meaning, when it uses that term; and, by this resolution, the Members of that Club have committed themselves to the performance of that, which can only be effected by bringing

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the king of Great Britain from his English throne, or placing some other person in his Irish one—they stand pledged by that resolution “as far as in them lies,” to accomplish, what common sense will pronounce to be impossible, or to perpetrate, what the law of this land does pronounce to be treason.

The “Whig” advocate for his brethren, saw somewhat of the difficulty of reconciling these two resolutions with the principle of “indissoluble connexion,” and, not unjudiciously, passes over the definition by which those gentlemen hazard the deposing of their sovereign, to come at the resolution of legislative independence. Incapable or unwilling to understand any distinct state of connection between entire UNION and entire SEPARATION, his terror, or his artifice, has raised a goblin, against which his fancy provides a defence, equally inefficacious and extravagant. “The doctrine,” says he, “that the king of Great-Britain is therefore, king of Ireland, leads to an union; against this deadly poison, the Whig Club offers you an antidote—make a king of your own—be independent and seperate;” he and I differ most widely. God forbid the time shall ever come to justify or prove our opinions: but, if ever that day shall arrive, when Ireland shall be driven to the melancholy alternative of entire union, or entire separation, her motto must be her option—“*Quis separabit?*”

The Whig Club is not ignorant of the warfare in which it was embarked: and the “Revolution of 1688,” and “the re-establishment of 1781,” are woven by their perplexity to form a shield, which should be impenetrable to common assailants.

In the statute of the 33d of Henry the Eighth, it is recited—" For as much as the king, our most gracious, dread sovereign lord, and his grace's most noble progenitors, *kings of England*, have been lords of this land of Ireland, having all manner of kingly jurisdiction, &c."

And then it enacts—" That the king's highness, his heirs and successors, kings of England, be always kings of this land of Ireland, and that his majesty, his heirs and successors, have the name, stile, title and honor of king of this land of Ireland, with all manner of honours, pre-eminencies, powers, jurisdictions, &c. as united and knit unto the imperial crown of England."

And then it concludes—" If any person or persons, of what estate, dignity, or condition soever he or they be, subject or resident within this land of Ireland, shall by writing or speaking deny the same—that they shall be adjudged guilty of treason, and suffer the punishment of traitors."

This was the principal of the Irish acts, by virtue of which the crown of Ireland had been considered to be legally annexed to the crown of England.

When I speak of the crown of either country, I mean the executive magistracy; and whether that be inherited by the succession of a king or a queen, or delegated by the substitution of a temporary regent; whether it be the devolution of the title, by heirship, or the election of a new sovereign from a new family, it matters not: the interpretation is uniform; the crown of Ireland is by that act annexed to the crown of England.

In recognition of this unity, then, comes the statute of the 4th of William and Mary, Chapter I. “ For as much as this kingdom of Ireland is annex-
 “ ed and united to the imperial crown of England,
 “ and by the laws and statutes of this kingdom, is
 “ declared to be justly and rightfully *depending upon*
 “ *and belonging*, and for ever united to the same, and
 “ the kings and queens of this realm, and ought to
 “ enjoy the stile, title, majesty, power, pre-emi-
 “ nence, jurisdiction, prerogative, and authority
 “ of the same.”

Here is the ground work of that constitution, which the Whig Club in one breath resolves to support, and in the next, pledges itself to overturn—and, than which, we can scarcely find in our statute book an object of more humiliating mortification to every man, who is really zealous for the independence of this kingdom—where our co-equality is sunk into dependance—the security by annexation is debased into an inferiority of rank—and the unity of the empire is forgotten in the claim of appropriation—for we are not only united, but we are *dependent on* and *belonging* to the crown of England.

It was this view of the statute of William and Mary that drew, from one of the first legal characters of this country, that clear and just observation that “ the reign of King William III. from which
 “ the free constitution of England had its begin-
 “ ning, was an æra of slavery to Ireland.”

A mistake has all along, during the late contests in this country, been industriously inculcated, whereby the constitution of Ireland, as to imperial purposes, and the constitution of her internal, political

tical liberty and legislative independence, have been confounded together.

The statute of William, already cited, shews, with sufficient precision, how the distinction was taken then: for, after enumerating the many advantages, which this country obtained by being saved from the Pope and the French, it goes on to acknowledge how his government restored to us “our laws, our liberties and the free administration of justice”—thereby contrasting, in the most discriminated terms, the imperial supremacy (which the revolution left as it found it) with the internal freedom (which that revolution secured).

If the words of these different laws should leave any doubt in our minds as to their precise meaning and operation, history is not silent in affording us interpretations for them both.

Under the statute of Henry, in confirmation of which, there is a number of enacting clauses in several other acts of his reign, it evidently appears, from the following remarkable circumstance, that the annexation of *the Crown of Ireland* to that of England, that is, the unity of the executive magistracy, was thereby held to be conclusive, even against the precise personal limitations of the parliament itself: when these limitations might contingently effect a separation; that is, it was conceived to bar the parliament from limiting the crown to any other person (however identified) than that person, in whom should be vested the executive magistracy in England. By the Irish statute of the 28th of Henry VIII. the succession to the Crown of Ireland, is (in conformity with an English statute then recently made) limited (by name) to the Princess Elizabeth, the daughter

daughter of Henry, by Anna Boleyn, and (generally) to their issue, in prejudice of the right of her eldest sister, Mary, the daughter of Henry, by his former Queen Catharine. By a subsequent act of the English Parliament the succession was again altered, to correspond with the usual course of inheritance in order of primogeniture, and Mary was restored, as to the crown of England *and the territories and appendages* thereunto belonging (of which Ireland was one) being declared *appendant and belonging* to the crown of England. But this statute was not enacted in Ireland. Here, notwithstanding the right of succession was specifically altered, and the successor identically marked out, yet, when on the death of Edward VI. Mary, under the direction of that English statute, was proclaimed in London, it was not deemed necessary to pass an act of parliament here confirmatory of her title, but she was at once received, *de jure*, as Queen of Ireland.

The principle on which a solemn act of the legislature was thus postponed to an English proclamation, is to be sought for a little further back. It is to be found in the civil commotions, in which this country had been involved by the influence of an English faction during the different contests between the houses of York and Lancaster, in that country, and the parties of the Fitzgeralds and Butlers in this. And it was adopted with equal wisdom and humanity, that, without regarding any personal attachments to the different claimants, the people of this country should be free from the mischiefs of rebellion, and discharged from the guilt of treason, so long as they would tender obedience to that power, which should be, *ipso facto*, the executive power of England.

From

From this time until the revolution, the unity of the two crowns remained without any alteration and with little enquiry—except as it is recognized by the 3d and 4th of Philip and Mary.

King James II. having “endeavoured to subvert
 “ the constitution (of England) by breaking the
 “ original contract between the king and the peo-
 “ ple; and, by the advice of Jesuits and other
 “ wicked persons, having violated the fundamental
 “ laws; and having withdrawn himself out of this
 “ kingdom, (of England) was declared, thereby,
 “ to have abdicated the government of the king-
 “ dom (of England) and the throne was, thereby,
 “ declared to be vacant.”

James, thus legally divested of that sovereignty over Great Britain, whose powers he had abused, and whose functions he had renounced, came to this country, deprived only, of so much of his imperial properties as depended upon the necessary unity of the executive character. He held an Irish parliament—he created Irish peers—he levied an Irish war—he called himself an Irish king; and his adherents, if they could have prophesied the prevalence of modern language, would have called themselves his loyal subjects of ancient, imperial, independent, unconnected Ireland.

Unluckily for James's cause, and his friends, their leader was a compound of bigotry and cowardice. Fortunately for the general interests of this country, his cowardice marred the success of those designs, which his bigotry planned. After the disgraceful battle at the Boyne put an end to his pretensions, a solemn act of the Irish legislature declared his government to have been an usurpation, and his war a rebellion. His patents were disal-
 F lowed,

lowed, and the acts of his parliament were obliterated—because he was not, then, king of England. “ For as much” says the statute of the 7th William and Mary, cap. 7. “ as since the happy ac-
 “ cession of his majesty king William, and the late
 “ queen Mary, of blessed memory, to the *imperial*
 “ *crown of England, whereunto this kingdom of Ire-*
 “ *land is inseparably annexed, united and belonging,*
 “ no parliament could, or ought to be holden with-
 “ in this kingdom, unless by their majesties’ autho-
 “ rity; yet, nevertheless, divers persons, during
 “ the late war *and rebellion* in this kingdom, did,
 “ on or about the seventh day of May, one thou-
 “ sand six hundred and eighty-nine, assemble them-
 “ selves at or near the city of Dublin, without
 “ authority derived from their majesties, and in
 “ opposition thereto, and being so assembled, did
 “ pretend to be, and did call themselves by the
 “ name of a parliament; and, acting *in concurrence*
 “ with the late king James, did make and pass,
 “ several pretended acts, and statutes, and did
 “ cause the same to be placed and recorded amongst
 “ the records and proceedings of parliament; all
 “ which pretended acts were formed and designed
 “ in manifest opposition *to the sovereignty of the crown*
of England.” The preamble goes on to declare
 them from the beginning and first making thereof,
 to have been null and void, to all intents, construc-
 tions, and purposes whatsoever. And the statute
 then goes on to enact, “ that all such pretended sta-
 tutes shall be annulled and cancelled.

Here we see the case of a king of Ireland, exer-
 cising *personally in Ireland* all the regal functions
 without having ever renounced a single article of
 them *as king of Ireland*; affecting the sovereignty of
 an unconnected and independent kingdom, and
 with

with the great seal of the kingdom in his hand, aiming at an entire, and eternal separation from England, stripped at once of all his visionary independence, and original supremacy, as a fruitless and treasonable attempt to disunite the imperial crowns of Great Britain and Ireland.

That unfortunate and deluded monarch called a parliament, in Ireland, which being composed of men legally incapacitated to sit in that assembly, was subversive of the constitution; he violated the original contract; he gave every justification for revolt, except abdication.

Would the parliament of Ireland have overlooked so glorious an opportunity of asserting, or even insinuating its independence, by assigning these reasons for *electing* William III. in prejudice of the rightful heir, if the principle of independence upon the crown of England, had ever entered into its thoughts? No, but the parliament of Ireland, seeing the inevitable necessity of preserving the executive magistracy of both countries entire, assigned that reason, and that alone, for confirming, not choosing that sovereign whom the legislature of England had *elected* to its government.

Perhaps all the rest of that impudence together, which has been employed in defence of the Whig Club, does not equal the assertion of the Whig advocate in treating of this circumstance. "Every act of recognition on the part of Ireland," says he, "previous to the revolution of 1688, acknowledges the kings of England to be kings of Ireland clearly upon the ground of inheritance. I have already had occasion to shew that, in fact, and in practice, the case was otherwise, when Mary was

recognized as queen of Ireland, in prejudice of the inheritance, limited by a positive act of the Irish parliament, to her sister Elizabeth. It is true, that in England the claim of hereditary title, has always been so much favoured, that, where it did exist, it has always been carefully acknowledged, and, where it did not, it has still been as carefully assumed. Henry IV. who, by the known laws of England, had no title to the throne, but that of usurpation, was not admitted thereto by the people, by right of conquest, but under a specious claim, as successor by descent, in the right line from Edward the Third. Was this necessary in Ireland? The stat. 28 Hen, VIII. Cap. 2. recites, that several others pretended “to the imperial crown of the realm of England, *whereunto this, your land of Ireland, is appending and belonging.*” The stat. 28. Hen. VIII. Cap. 3. “For as much as it is notorious and manifest, that this, the King’s land of Ireland, heretofore being inhabited, and in due obedience and subjection unto the king’s most noble progenitors, kings of England, *who in those days, in the right of of the crown of England,* had great possessions, rents and profits within the same land, &c.

If it had been true, that there was no such recognition, antecedent to the revolution, then we must consider the statute of the 4th of William, (already cited) as an original surrender of the Irish independence to the supremacy of the English crown, in which light the author has reduced himself to an extremely awkward situation, in supporting the revolution principles.

Those, whose patience, leisure, or ability, would not admit of a research into history, and whose present stock of that species of knowledge, incapacitated them

them from deciding by their own judgments would readily give full credit to the men who avow themselves the assertors of the revolution in 1688. Every Irishman will support the principle of the re-establishment, in 1782.

The Whig Club therefore, were prudent in making that establishment their *third* grand principle.

On this head, it may not be impertinent to state, what were the precise objects which were fought and obtained by the people of Ireland, in 1782.

The great causes of complaint with the Irish, so far as they had any relation to the imperial connection of the two countries, before the year 1782, were:—

The inordinate power of the privy council, in suppressing and altering bills.

The right of legislation, assumed by the English parliament, in the Declaratory Act of the 6th of Geo. I.

To restore to us the entire right of legislation, Mr. Fox's English statute of repeal opened the way, and Mr. Grenville's English statute of renunciation, perfected our independence. That independence in our legislature is declared to exist of right, and that it never can again be questioned, or questionable.

To deliver us from the unconstitutional controul of council boards, *and to preserve the union of the two imperial crowns* were the objects attained by Mr. Yelverton's statute in Ireland. This statute enacts,
 “ That the lord lieutenant or other chief governor,
 “ do, and shall certify all such bills, *and none other,*
 “ as

“ as both houses of parliament shall judge expedient
 “ to be enacted, to his Majesty, under the great
 “ seal of Ireland, and that all those bills which shall
 “ be so certified to his majesty, under the great seal
 “ of Ireland, and returned into the same, *under the*
 “ *great seal of Great Britain*, without addition, di-
 “ minution or alteration, *and none other* shall pass in
 “ the parliament of this kingdom.”

Perhaps in our code of laws another clause could not be selected, on which ingenuity would find it more difficult to write a comment. Every term and every phrase of it stands so precisely and fitly placed in its just relation, and the whole connexion of it is so purely and plainly preserved, that fancy would be at a loss to vary its interpretation.

If, at the time of passing this act, terms more strongly corroborative of the ancient federal constitution of the empire had been necessary, there is no doubt they would have been used. Mr. Conolly, whose approbation was so chilly of the measures which were then pursued by the people, to recover those rights, for which he publicly avowed *he never had been a stickler*, had scarcely ventured to propose a separation of the executive. No; his language and the language of his friends at that time was,
 “ Give us a common king, the impartial father of
 “ all his people: one law of empire, and one re-
 “ ligion, by which our interests, our passions, and
 “ our prejudices may be kept from clashing.”

There was no necessity to re-affert the annexation and dependance of the crown of Ireland—
 “ The unity of the crowns,” says the Whig, for the Whig Club, “ had been recognized and univer-
 “ sally embraced; nor was any one act of annexa-
 “ tion

“ tion in the least degree affected by the Revolution of 1782.” By their own confession then the Whigs allow, that the necessity of an unity of the executive magistracy (and that is the intelligible meaning of a term, that would be but a better kind of nonsense, if applied merely to a rim of gold and a cross of rubies) was in all its original unqualified force in 1789.

The Whig Club were not ignorant of the doubtful reputation they had acquired in the world, and, therefore, when they made their grand appeal to the people, a necessity at once suggested itself of prescribing certain intelligible rules of action and defining certain objects of pursuit, which every body could understand. Therefore, as their brother says, “ they have not been content with laying down general grounds of attachment to that party (*i. e.* Mr. Fox’s party) but have likewise set forth particularly what these grounds are.”

It is with that view doubtless that this body pledges itself.

In the 4th place.—“ Ever to adhere to the principles which directed the lords and commons of Great Britain, when, on a late melancholy occasion, they addressed his royal highness the prince of Wales to take upon himself, during his father’s indisposition, the administration of affairs, free from occasional and unconstitutional restrictions.”

This resolution, compared with the other professions of the Whig Club, naturally divides into two branches—the address itself conferring this power on the prince—and the measure of power to be granted.

The

The whole of the reasoning, which has been urged on both sides of this question, comes simply to this. Whether under the known laws of this kingdom, and the circumstances of the times, it was lawful and expedient in the houses of lords and commons to elect, for this country, a regent, without any relation to the regent, who should be appointed by the parliament of Great Britain.

Few topics have been agitated with more heat than was indulged, or supported by worse arguments than have been used, in support of the affirmative. But the heat was pardoned for apparent zeal, and what the arguments wanted of reason, was supplied by their popularity. Of the people who would not rejoice at a resident king of Ireland, the personal patron of the arts, the personal dictator of the fashions, the personal promoter of the commerce of his infant country? Of their leaders, those, whom the royal favour had ripened into strength, did not apprehend at the son's hands a degradation from that rank, to which they had crept under the father; and, those, whom the royal grace had hitherto illuminated, only through the medium of its bounty, might now be dazzled by the full glare of the regal character. The idle and the thoughtless in the middle ranks would joyfully hazard their necks, and waste their fortunes, in emulating the glorious achievements, or imitating the splendid luxury of the man, because he was a prince. In the higher classes they would dissipate with as little consideration in conformity with the prince because he was a gentleman. Of the nobility few would resist an example, which it would be the interest or vanity of so many to confirm. Of the gentry, none could think that beggary dishonourable, that had attended the imitation of so bright a pattern.

a pattern. Of the traders, none would feel disgrace at bankruptcy, nor sorrow at imprisonment, while they could reflect that their country was independent, its empire exclusive, and its crown unconnected. The graziers would rejoice that there was an end to their apprehensions for a quick market or a good price, and their flocks would be permitted to pasture and propagate unfleeced and undisturbed. The husbandman would find the golden age renewed, when "every rood of ground" maintained its man," and would be contented in drawing from the earth a competency for subsistence. All the labour of mechanism, all the hazard of manufactures, all the selfish intrigue and mercenary monopoly of trade would be at an end. Our bogs and our mountains would present to the ardent spirits of Irishmen, in the desolated vallies and depopulated towns, scenes of more true glory than appears in all the pomp of harvest, and all the thriving industry of commerce, where independence is not to be found.

From this intoxicating dream of happiness, however, we should soon be awakened. The empty parade of independence would profit us little, when we should have no resource upon which to depend. The boasted and unfulfilled honour of our country would find itself but badly employed for the protection of that trade, in which we should run the hazard of being captured as smugglers, or hanged as pirates, by all the nations of Europe. Thus exposed in case of war to every enemy of Great Britain because of our supposed connexion—deprived of the proper protection of Great Britain, because of our real disunion—robbed of a sovereign, whose government has favoured, and whose affections have benefited us—whose imperial character

rafter is definite, acknowledged, and local—amused by a phantom of sovereignty, of no possible service, because wanting power, and of every possible danger, because unpossessed of responsibility; for whom you may look in vain in Ireland, where he is not, or in England where he is not acknowledged—puzzled in the contemplation of the executive magistracy, for whose utility or honour nothing more had been done, than rendering it incomprehensible by perplexity—and looking in vain to an impracticable government, for security in the blessings of peace, or protection against the mischiefs of war—through what singular interposition of heaven is it, that a poor and struggling people should expect salvation from such a multitude of calamities?

But why need I argue against the expediency of the measure? To preserve the empire, the appointment of the prince of Wales to the regency of this kingdom by bill, or the submission to him by address, unless as a consequence of his character as regent of Great Britain, would be equally incongruous, and while the preservation of the imperial unity between Great Britain and Ireland is deemed a necessary ingredient in the constitution, such a measure goes to subvert the constitution.

It is true, the Whig Club has by its mouth-piece and brother “the Whig,” put a construction upon this resolution, under the pretence of defending Mr. Fox’s doctrine, from which its own originated—and which, if one were implicitly to accept it, would leave any man living in the dark as to the real intentions of that society in subscribing it. “In case of incapacity in the king,” says the Whig, “the prince of Wales, arrived at maturity of years,
“ and

“ and judgment, and not labouring under any legal
 “ disqualifications had (by the principles of heredi-
 “ tary monarchy, transmitted by usage from our
 “ ancestors, and completely ascertained by law,
 “ at the revolution) the undoubted *right* to be in-
 “ vested with the supreme power, during such in-
 “ capacity; *at the same time however, that he could*
 “ *not proceed to the exercise of that power without the*
 “ *recognition of the Lords and commons.*”

It is impossible for a man, who is in earnest, to answer such incomprehensible nonsense.—How can I disprove that the prince of Wales has an undoubted right to be invested with the supreme power of the state, by any better argument than this, that the recognition (that is the *legislative act of the lords and commons*) is necessary to invest him therewith? Or how shall I prove that the lords and commons must necessarily legislate, to create such an investiture, by any stronger reason than this, that without such, their legislation, he cannot be legally and effectually invested?

I trust, from the former part of this argument, it appears that under our present acknowledged laws, and in preservation of our present established constitution, an act of the English legislature was in the case of his majesty's late illness, necessary to supply the deficiency of the executive power to all the imperial purposes of this kingdom. And it will necessarily result that, when he should have been so created, and not before, it would, under the terms of Mr. Yelverton's act, be competent to certify a bill from the lords and commons, for the appointing of a regent; which bill could then be returned under the great seal of England, legally fitted

and perfect to receive the royal assent, and to become a statute of the realm.

The one, as it was forcibly and tersely put by Lord Fitzgibbon, made him regent, as to imperial purposes; the other made him regent to all the purposes of legislation.

The then majority, in both Houses of parliament thought otherwise. And the situation of some of them, was not a little ridiculous, when they said that the friends of government were substituting the great seal of another country for the imperial crown of Ireland, after they themselves had, by their own law, positively and explicitly enjoined, that no act of theirs could pass into a law in Ireland, without that evidence of assent which that organ alone could convey. First, they created the necessity by as positive a law as any in the statute book, and then they abused the conduct of those, who only observed their own ordinance. What can be expected from the candour of such men?

The advocate for the Whig Club has made an extraordinary attempt to bring them out of their dilemma, and to fix upon lord Fitzgibbon's character a charge of *precipitancy* in the regency business. "He might have urged the necessity of delay," says this man, "till a regent of England should be appointed, *lest a difficulty might arise from the two countries choosing different regents*, then proposed an address to the regent of England, that he should take upon him the executive power of the country during his majesty's indisposition; by which address he would acquire a capacity of setting the great seal of England in his possession to an act of regency, if such were thought necessary." Now, I appeal to the re-
collection

collection of any man who attended the parliament at that time to establish the indecency of this insinuation.

The chancellor (then Mr. Fitzgibbon) *did* urge the necessity of waiting till a regent should be appointed in England—that then the Irish parliament would be competent to legislate for the appointment of a regent in Ireland, and that where there was an option, it was better that they should legislate for the purpose of creating a third estate, than that they should create a third estate for the purpose of legislating. The present solicitor general urged the necessity of delay on the same ground, because said he, if you do not wait until a regent is appointed by the English parliament, you sacrifice the principle of union to the possibility of the event, by hazarding the appointment of different executives.

Suppose that a circumstance which was then foreseen by the prince's friends had happened: that, in disgust at the restrictions put upon him by the regency bill, he had refused to accept that power from the parliament of England: the actual precipitancy of the majority in parliament here had invested him with the regency: How could they recall it without a disgraceful admission of dependence, which they denied, or how could they carry it into effect, without actually causing an entire legal separation, and cutting the only thread by which the federal union of the empire is preserved—the unity of the executive magistracy? Consistently with the ancient forms of our constitution, and with the material compactness of the imperial connexion, we might as well have sent a deputation to bring a priest from the college of
cardinals,

cardinals, or an eunuch from the seraglio, to be our regent.

The right of the prince of Wales to the regency of Ireland, without having recourse to the great seal of another country—upon the principle of hereditary right in him, and the competency of the two houses of parliament here—was, however, to be coupled with another circumstance of equal novelty and inconsistency; for he was to be invested with the executive power—free from all occasional and unconstitutional restrictions.

This language, translated into plain English, according to the idioms of the Whig Club, comes to this and no more, nor less.

“ We demand, and will endeavour to obtain
 “ a bill to limit the amount of pensions to be
 “ granted *by the king*.

“ We are determined, as far as in us lies, to
 “ obtain a place bill, to prevent certain persons, em-
 “ ployed *by the crown*, from sitting in parliament.

“ We are resolved to diminish the undue influ-
 “ ence *of the crown*.

“ But when we call upon the prince of Wales to
 “ take upon him, for a time the administration of
 “ affairs, we will not tie up his hands from increa-
 “ sing the influence *of the regent*, and establishing a
 “ permanent party in the country, by raising any
 “ indefinite number of his friends to the peerage. We
 “ will not circumscribe the liberality of his temper
 “ by limiting the amount of the pension list as to
 “ him. And his placemen, old or new, shall not
 “ be

“ be marked out by any sort of incapacitation. And
 “ to shew the discretion with which we leave his
 “ hands thus at liberty, we have permitted this lati-
 “ tude to him at the very moment that the parlia-
 “ ment of England has so strictly confined him in
 “ these great articles, that the only possible method
 “ left for him to provide for his friends, is by lad-
 “ dling this country with the burden of them ”

It is easy to see, that under powers so liberally
 granted, how readily those needy crowd that is
 called by the name of his friends, would find a
 ready asylum for their wants in the liberality of
 Irish profusion.

When I mention the name of his royal high-
 ness the prince of Wales, I would be understood to
 attach to his character, as many amiable personal
 qualifications, as ever entitled a gentleman to the
 friendship and affection of those who knew him,
 and as much political virtue as may be necessary to
 prevent the prince of a free people from becoming
 a scourge to those, for whose blessing he is
 designed.

But he is a man, peculiarly liable to those ge-
 nerous feelings and susceptibilities of friendship
 and partiality, which sweeten the intercourse and
 dignify the character of mankind: but which can
 soothe the inflexibility of virtue, and make gene-
 rosity subservient to the purposes of intrigue and
 faction.

It proved the weakness of that cause, which
 threw off its loyalty to the regal character for a
 time-serving adulation, and shew of personal at-
 tachment: when men attempted to secure, for
 themselves

themselves, a place in the personal affections of the king, by affecting a personal attachment to the prince: by matting together an hereditary faction, to bias the direction of the general superintendance, by an unnatural prepossession for families and individuals, and eradicating from the mind of the heir apparent, the general affection for all his Irish people, to substitute a system of favouritism for a few Irishmen.

These reflections have carried me further than I intended. The Whig Club is not an object of terror with me. Its principles are mischievous, and I wish to see them exploded. He is not an object of terror with me, who only affects to love the country because he hates the minister: I can not be seriously terrified by a man, who promises to dethrone the king and alter the constitution. Let him avow his detestation of the pension list—let him avow a resolution to fetter the known and legal prerogative in the hands of the king—let him avow his willingness to transfer that prerogative unfettered to a temporary substitute—let him exclaim against the bribery and the persecution of printers—let him be called a *patriot*—for he signed the Round Robin against lord Buckingham's administration, and the resolutions of the Whig Club against the constitution—let him be called a *patriot*, for he promised to alter the mode of representation, delivered down by his ancestors, without knowing, or heeding, when or whether it ever shall be of use. He promises to ensure a repeal of laws, whose effects have not been proved—he will abolish all borough interest—and he promises to obey with implicit submission, the popular instructions of his constituents.

With

With those, to whose tempers and capacities this species of reasoning applies, little good can be wrought by argument. The country and its friends have to rejoice that they are but few—their virtue little—and, their reputation less.

The Whig Club may meet once in a fortnight—and once in a fortnight they may get drunk in honour of Charles Fox and the revolution. They may get some hireling, or some idler to recite their glories, to talk of their honour, and to puff their characters. They may praise each other. They may form a political Lexicon, and give the old names of virtues, of which they are ignorant, to their follies and their vices. But the people of this country are too intelligent to be wheedled into a confidence in such characters. The writhings of disappointed ambition, or neglected turbulence, will not be mistaken for an active vigilance of the public weal. Their sedition will not be estimated for patriotism. They may supply the want of truth by impudence, and support calumny by outrage. Audacity will not put upon falsehood the semblance of truth, nor dignity with the character of justifiable complaint, the rancour of defamation.

THE END.

